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News Release

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Saskatchewan

Agriculture

AGRICULTURE BUDGET FOCUSES ON FARMERS AND RANCHERS

The Government of Saskatchewan is committing \$385.8 million in the 2010-11 Agriculture budget to continue improving programs and meeting the needs of farming and ranching families.

The province's 40 per cent share of business risk management programs will be fully funded in the 2010-11 budget. Approximately three quarters of the ministry budget goes toward fully funding these programs, which include AgriStability, AgriInvest and Crop Insurance. This program funding is based on federal projections and varies year to year due to factors such as commodity prices and income projections.

"We believe full funding for these programs needs to be committed up front," Agriculture Minister Bob Bjornerud said. "Farmers and ranchers can be assured their government will stand behind them as they head into the upcoming growing season."

The Crop Insurance Program has been enhanced this year to include coverage for camelina, navy beans, soybeans and honey. In addition, the contract price option has been expanded to include flax, lentils and alfalfa seed. Yield cushioning is now a permanent feature, after being a pilot program in 2009. This feature limits the impact of consecutive poor growing seasons, such as a prolonged drought, on a producer's level of coverage.

The 2010-11 Agriculture budget also includes funding for an improved Wildlife Damage Compensation Program, which is administered by the Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation (SCIC), to help producers deal with wildlife damage and livestock predation. The program now includes 100 per cent producer compensation for livestock killed by predators and up to 80 per cent of the market value for injured livestock requiring veterinary services. Other new program features include compensation for wildlife damage to feed used for swath, bale and corn grazing, as well as compensation for wild boar damage to crops.

In addition, SCIC will now administer programs to help producers deal with livestock predation and wildlife damage prevention measures such as fencing around feed stacks and intercept feeding stations.

The Agriculture budget also includes continued funding for comprehensive pest control. This includes the Gopher Control Rebate Program, which was first introduced in 2008, rat control and wild boar control.

The provincial government will continue to fund agriculture research that will provide benefits to producers at the farm gate. This includes funding for projects through the Agriculture Development Fund and funding for producer groups to demonstrate new technologies in their local areas.

Other Budget highlights include continued funding for the Crown Land Sales Program, the Farm and Ranch Water Infrastructure Program, Environmental Farm Programming, the Farm Business Development Initiative, the Voluntary Livestock Traceability Rebate and food safety programming. In addition, producers will benefit from the continued education tax reduction introduced in 2009.

“With this Budget we are taking a forward looking approach to agriculture and continuing to improve our programs,” Bjornerud said. “We want our budget dollars to be spent where they create the most benefit – meeting the needs of farmers and ranchers.”

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